

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Nepal/Bhutan

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1. The geographical areas in Nepal occupied by the many tribes there are difficult to define since members of all the tribes are found in all parts of the country. However, the following most important tribes are from the areas named:

- (a) Rais (descendants of Kirantis) - east
- (b) Sherpas (Khumbu District) - north and northeast
- (c) Gurungs - east and southeast
- (d) Tamangs - east and southeast
- (e) Chetris - central
- (f) Dotials - west
- (g) Tharus - southwest
- (h) Yolmos (Mustang [sic] District)-northwest

omitted the Limbus who are from east Nepal and the Newars from central Nepal since they are not true tribes but clans.

2. The Limbus and Rais are agricultural; the Sherpas are mountain climbers and picked for many expeditions; and the Newars are tradesmen, writers, politicians, artisans and the richest people in Nepal. The Nepalese in Tibet are Newars. The Dotials, Tharus and Yolmos were the Mongoloid or lamastic people but are now Hinduized. The former Kirantis are popularly but incorrectly called Kirats. Kirat is the name of part of the area in which the Kirantis (now Rais) live. The Limbus and Rais produced the Nepal rulers at one time and their members consider themselves better than the other Nepalese. However, the Chetris, from whom the Ghurkas come, are ranked second to the priests in the caste system. This makes the Chetris the highest tribe in the social order.

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3. There is no definite tension among Nepal's tribes. The only possible friction may result from the tribes' positions in the social caste system. [redacted] a statistical comparison because Nepal has never taken a census. [redacted] the Limbus are most numerous in the east and throughout Nepal with the Chetris and Newars outnumbering the tribes or clans in the south and central areas, respectively.
 4. All the tribes and clans have complete freedom of movement within Nepal. The most migratory are the Limbus, Rais and Darangs. The Newars are the only people who have migrated to neighboring countries in great numbers. They settled as traders in Tibet many years ago but, like all their countrymen, are not going there now [1953]. However, they continue to enter Sikkim and now outnumber the Sikkimese there. This migration is a result of an original Nepalese resettlement policy initiated by the British.
 5. Relationships between the Nepalese tribes and the Bhutanese are good. (There is no tribe correctly named "Botias" or "Bhotias". "Bhotia" is a Tibetan word given to all Tibetans south of the Himalayas. Therefore there is no Bhotia tribe in Bhutan in the true sense. The popularly named Bhotias there are actually the same as the tribes in Nepal or other areas who came from Tibet.)
 6. The Sikkimese greatly resent the influx of Newars. Also, wars between Sikkim and Nepal years ago have resulted in an unfriendly feeling between the two countries. However, the Newars are more ambitious and industrious and have managed to secure a sound grasp on Sikkim's economy and politics. It is doubtful that Sikkim's resentment will lead to any major quarrels.

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